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**Inventory for**

# Manuscript Collection
# MS - 322

# James Farrin Account Book

**1827-1838**

by
Elisabeth Meier
July 2018

½ box
.2 linear feet
*Accession no. 66.1857*

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## Abstract

**James Farrin (1802-1856)**

**Account book, 1827-1838**

½ box

Shoemaker and slop seller in Bath, Maine

This collection contains an account book for James Farrin's shoe and slop shop in Bath, Maine, kept between 1827 and 1838. Farrin (1802-1856) sold ready-made shoes and clothing to a wide range of customers in Bath and nearby towns. He also outfitted sailors with clothing ("slops") and other basic items like sea chests, knives, and oilskin jackets. Individual customers' accounts often include notes on their occupations, employers, or race.

Gift of Ivan A. Trueworthy.

MS-322. Accession #66.1857.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

**Added entries—persons**:

Farrin, James (1802-1856)

**Added entries—key terms**:

Account books
African Americans—Maine—Bath
Bath (Me.) – Businesses
Clothing and dress
Merchant mariners
Shoe industry

## Acquisition

Ivan A. Trueworthy donated this volume to the museum in 1966.

## Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

## Physical Condition

The covers are battered and worn, but the volume is otherwise in good condition.

## Processing Notes

This volume was part of a larger gift of thirteen account books and letter copy books from Henry W. Swanton, the Swanton, Jameson Company ship chandlery, Goss Marine Iron Works, and the Eastern Steamboat Company, all of which are now in MS-9. As James Farrin had no known relationship to any of these, this volume has been processed separately.

## Historical Note

James Farrin (1802-1856) operated a shoe and slop shop in Bath, Maine, in the early nineteenth century. He began as a shoe-seller, selling ready-made boots, shoes, and slippers to men and women alike.[1] In the 1830s, Farrin expanded his stock to include ready-made clothing known as slops, particularly durable, hard-wearing items like duck pantaloons, oilcloth jackets, and glazed hats for sailors and other laborers. Alongside such practical items, he sold small luxuries like tobacco, silk handkerchiefs, perfume, and combs. The majority of his business, however, remained in shoes. In 1850, when asked by the census taker, Farrin called himself a shoemaker.

Farrin lived his entire life in Bath. He married Mary Jane Shaw (1804-1852) in 1829. They had four children, only one of whom, James W. Farrin (b. 1843), survived past early adulthood.

## Scope and Content Note

This account book records Farrin's sales of shoes, ready-made clothing, oilskins, hats, and small luxuries to a wide range of customers in Bath and neighboring towns. It also lists sales of sea chests, belts, and sheath knives to aspiring seamen, their parents, or captains. Most accounts were settled in cash, although there is an occasional barter in-kind.

In addition to sales and payments, Farrin often made detailed notes about his customers' hometowns, occupations, employers, and race. This makes the book an unusual record of sailors and other working-class residents of Bath in the early nineteenth century. There is no index to the volume.

## Box and Folder List

| Box | Folder | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | James Farrin, account book, 1827-1838 |
| | 2 | Inclusions from account book, 1830-1838 |

[1] An advertisement in the *Maine Inquirer* in November, 1831 reads: "James Farrin has lately received his Fall & Winter supply of boots, shoes, & hats of all descriptions. Also—ladies' shoes, of all kinds & qualities, of the latest fashion." (15 November 1831 p. 4).